

Message Text

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SUBJ: QADHAFI VISIT TO MALTA

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1. AS EXPECTED, FIRST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS OF QADHAFI'S VISIT TO MALTA HAVE BEEN MARKED BY A NUMBER OF HIGHLY PUBLICIZED OFFICIAL APPEARANCES AND PUBLIC CEREMONIES. QADHAFI RECEIVED FULL MILITARY HONORS AT THE AIRPORT UPON ARRIVAL, WHERE HE WAS WELCOMED BY MALTA'S PRESIDENT, SIR ANTHONY MAMO, AND OTHER SENIOR GOM OFFICIALS. QADHAFI WAS CHEERED AT THE AIRPORT BY A PREASSEMBLED GROUP ON THE TERMINAL BALCONY WAVING FLAGS AND PORTRAITS. HE WENT FROM THE AIRPORT TO SAN ANTON PALACE, WHERE HE IS STAYING WITH PRESIDENT MAMO DURING THE VISIT.

2. DURING THE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 19, QADHAFI VISITED THE MALTA DRYDOCKS, WHERE HE INSPECTED A 5,000 TON FLOATING DOCK BEING CONSTRUCTED FOR LIBYA. HE RECEIVED OVATIONS FROM THE DOCKYARD WORKERS WHEN HE WALKED AMONG THEM IN THE DOCKYARD COMPLEX.

3. IN THE EVENING, QADHAFI WENT TO THE AUBERGE DE CASTILLE FOR A MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF. QADHAFI WAS ACCOMPANIED

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BY LIBYAN FOREIGN MINISTER MAJOR 'ABD AL-MUNIM AL-HUNI AND

MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS TAHIR BIN AMIR. MINTOFF'S ENTIRE CABINET WAS PRESENT FOR THE TWO-HOUR SESSION. THERE HAVE, AS YET, BEEN NO REPORTS ON THE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MINTOFF AND QADHAFI.

4. AFTERWARD, QADHAFI VISITED THE HEADQUARTERS OF MALTA'S GENERAL WORKERS UNION, WHERE AGAIN HE WAS GREETED BY LARGE, ENTHUSIASTIC CROWDS, AND THEN HE ATTENDED A CULTURAL PROGRAM AT THE MANOEL THEATER TO COMPLETE THE EVENING.

5. MINTOFF HAS DONE A THOROUGH JOB OF ORCHESTRATING AN IMPRESSIVE PUBLIC WELCOME FOR QADHAFI, DESPITE DEEP-SEATED RESERVATIONS AMONG MANY MALTESE CONCERNING JUST HOW "FRIENDLY" THE RELATIONS ARE, OR SHOULD BE, BETWEEN MALTA AND LIBYA. FOR HIS PART, QADHAFI APPEARS TO BE ENJOYING HIMSELF, SMILING AND WORKING THE CROWDS LIKE A WESTERN POLITICAN RUNNING FOR ELECTION.

6. DIFFERENCES IN MALTESE ATTITUDES TOWARD MINTOFF'S POLICY OF COZYING UP TO HIS "NON-ALIGNED" ARAB NEIGHBOR ARE WELL REFLECTED IN EDITORIALS IN THE DECEMBER 20 ISSUES OF MALTA'S TWO ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DAILY NEWSPAPERS. WHILE PRO-MINTOFF MALTA NEWS REFERS TO ITS "EXCEPTIONAL PLEASURE" AT HAVING SUCH A "DISTINGUISHED GUEST," CONSERVATIVE, ANTI-MINTOFF TIMES OF MALTA ADVISES GOM TO "TREAD WARILY" IN DEALING WITH QADHAFI.

7. MALTA NEWS PRAISED MALTESE-LIBYAN RELATIONS IN THE FOLLOWING TERMS:

A. "(QADHAFI'S) STAY IN MALTA GIVES THE MALTESE PEOPLE EXCEPTIONAL PLEASURE FOR APART FROM THE GEOGRAPHICAL CLOSENESS AND THE TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO PEOPLES, MALTA AND LIBYA HAVE A LOT IN COMMON. BOTH HAVE SUFFERED FROM NEO-COLONIALISM BUT BOTH ARE NOW EMERGING STRONGER THAN EVER. WITH THE UNITED EFFORTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES, THE TIES BETWEEN MALTA AND LIBYA HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FOREGOED WITH FRIENDLY SENTIMENTS...

B. "MALTA IS PARTICULARLY INDEBTED TO LIBYA AND ITS PRESIDENT WHO STOOD FOUR-SQUARE BEHIND US DURING MALTA'S MOST CRUCIAL PERIOD WHEN THE GOVERNMENT WAS RE-NEGOTIATING THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEFENCE AGREEMENT WITH BRITAIN. LIBYA HAS ALSO PROVIDED MALTA WITH OIL WHEN THE ARAB COUNTRIES IMPOSED THEIR EMBARGO ON MOST COUNTRIES. BUT LIBYA'S HELP HAS NOT BEEN RESTRICTED TO THESE OCCASIONS. IT HAS MADE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS IN OTHER SPHERES WITH FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL HELP TOWARDS THE MODERNISATION OF OUR HOSPITALS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY.

C. " WE ARE CERTAIN THAT PRESIDENT QADHAIF'S VISIT WILL MAKE FURTHER IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROMOTION OF THE CAUSE OF THE MALTESE PEOPLE AND TOWARDS MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. HIS STAY AMONGST US WILL SURELY OPEN NEW VISTAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES."

8. ON THE OTHER HAND, TIMES OF MALTA REFERRED TO CERTAIN VERY REAL PROBLEMS WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AND WARNED THAT QADHAIF IS NOT NECESSARILY TO BE TRUSTED.

A. "AN OUTSTANDING ISSUE DIRECTLY AFFECTING RELATIONS BETWEEN MALTA AND LIBYA CONCERNS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MEDIAN LINE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. A WIDE DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS PREVAILS BETWEEN THE MALTESE AND LIBYAN GOVERNMENTS ON THE EXTENSION OF TERRITORIAL WATERS FOR PURPOSES OF OFFSHORE OIL EXPLORATION....

B. "TODAY'S TALKS BETWEEN MR. MINTOFF AND COL. QADHAFI MAY WELL RESULT IN THIS OVERDUE DECISION BEING REACHED, A DECISION, WE HOPE, THAT WOULD ENABLE MALTA TO PROCEED WITH HER OFFSHORE OIL EXPLORATION PROGRAMME. WHEN THE NEW, OFFSHORE AREA IN THE SOUTH OF MALTA WAS OPENED FOR OIL EXPLORATION, THE GOVERNMENT SAID THAT FIVE OF THE 16 BLOCKS OFFERED WERE SUBJECT TO ALTERATIONS IN THE LIGHT OF ANY AGREEMENT ON THE MEDIAN LINE BETWEEN MALTA AND LIBYA....

C. "ANOTHER OUTSTANDING PROBLEM BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ARISES FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S OIL DEAL WITH LIBYA.ON DECEMBER 10, 1973, THE PRIME MINISTER INFORMED PARLIAMENT THAT THE LIBYAN STATE COMPANY, BREGA PETROLEUM MARKETING COMPANY LIMITED, WAS TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT BETWEEN 500,000 AND 600,000 METRIC TONS OF CRUDE OIL FOR DELIVERY BETWEEN JANUARY AND DECEMBER OF THIS YEAR.

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D. "THE ACTUAL PRICE LIBYA HAS BEEN CHARGING MALTA FOR THE CRUDE OIL HAS NEVER BEEN DIVULGED. NEITHER IS IT PUBLICLY KNOWN WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAS IN FACT FULLY USED THE LIBYAN OIL MENTIONED IN THE AGREEMENT OR FOUND OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPLY. IF GOVERNMENT IS CONTEMPLATING THE RENEWAL OF THE OIL AGREEMENT WITH LIBYA, WHEN IT EXPIRES THIS MONTH, CARE HAS TO BE TAKEN THAT THE PURCHASING PRICE AND QUALITY ARE COMPETITIVE WITH THOSE OF OTHER OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES, SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA.

E. "THERE ARE OTHER MATTERS WHICH HAVE A CLOSE BEARING ON MALTESE-LIBYAN RELATIONS AND OVER WHICH CAUTION IS CALLED FOR. WHILE OVERSEAS INVESTMENT INTO THE LOCAL ECONOMY IS TO BE ENCOURAGED, THE DEVELOPING TREND OF A WIDE-RANGING RELIANCE

ON LIBYAN INVESTMENT CAUSES CONCERN. RECENT HISTORY HAS
TAUGHT MANY COUNTRIES OF THE CONSEQUENCES WHENEVER THEY HAVE
FALLEN SHORT OF THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE LIBYAN PRESIDENT
COLONEL QADHAFI.

F. "RECENT OVERSEAS PRESS REPORTS DESCRIBED LIBYAN PURCHASE
OF LAND IN OTHER MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES AS 'STRATEGIC,' WITH
THE LIBYAN LAND DEAL ON PANTELLERIA QUALIFIED AS 'AN UGLY
INTRUSION OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS'. THE GOVERNMENT WOULD
BE WISE TO TREAD WARLY AND ENSURE THAT, WHILE TRADING WITH LIBYA
WITHOUT ANY OBLIGATIONS, MALTA MAINTAINS HER RIGHTFUL PLACE IN
WESTERN EUROPE."

9. COMMENT: IT IS LIKELY THAT SOME, IF NOT ALL, OF THE ISSUES
CITED BY TIMES OF MALTA WILL BE DISCUSSED BETWEEN MINTOFF AND
QADHAIF. HOWEVER, GIVEN MINTOFF'S HABIT OF KEEPING THE DETAILS
OF IMPORTANT ISSUES FROM THE PUBLIC, IT MAY BE SOME TIME BEFORE
ANY MEANINGFUL RESULTS FROM QADHAIF'S VISIT ARE KNOWN. SMITH

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